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An Observation

Concerning a Blemish in an Horses Eye, not hitherto discover'd by any Author, which may be of great use in the Choice of an Horse to those who are Curious; made by Dr. Richard Lower at the Royal Society, January 23. 1667.

AMong the many defects and distempers in the Eyes, the Eyes of Horses are peculiarly affected with one, which no Animal besides is troubled withall (as far as I have observed) neither do I remember any Author hitherto to have taken notice of it; and that is a *Spungy Excrecence* (commonly of a dark musk-colour) which grows out of the edge of that Coat of the Eye called the *Uvea*; which Sponge, if it grow large, or increase in number (as it frequently happens) it depraves the sight very much, or totally intercepts it. But that you may more easily conceive the manner how 'tis done, you may remember, that the *Uvea* is a *musculous* part, the use of it being chiefly to contract and dilate it self for the admission of the Objects with as much light as the Eye can conveniently bear; so that the brighter and more refulgent the light is, to which the Eye is expos'd, that Membrane contracts it self into a narrower compass; and the more dark the place is, it dilates it self the more, as you may see in a *Cats* Eye more readily perform'd, than in any other *Animal* I have yet observ'd: So that if that *spungy* substance, which grows out of the edge of the *Uvea*, be so great, or the number of them such, as that they grow in several places about the *pupil* of the Eye, where it contracts it self, the *pupil* or sight is very much (if not totally) obstructed, and consequently the Horse sees very little or nothing at all: As I have many times taken exact notice in some Horses, which being brought into the Sun-shine, could not see at all, but suffer'd me to touch the *sight* of their Eye with my finger without the least winking; which Horses being led back into the Stable, the *Uvea* in that obscure place dilating it self, they could see very well again, and would not suffer me to shew my finger near to the Eye without frequent closing their Eye-lids and tossing their Heads. The same Horses I understood by the

Owners were very apt to stumble in the day-time, if it were bright and Sun-shine, but travell'd very well and securely in the evening, and in dark cloudy weather.

What the *cause* may be of that fungous Excreſcence, or why Horſes are peculiarly obnoxious to it, or what kind of Horſes moſt, I have not conſidered. But, I cannot think, it comes from ſtraining in great draughts and races, or from hard travel, becauſe I have ſeen very large *Spunges* (as I may call them) in young Horſes eyes of 2 and 4 years old, before they were backed; which, after they have been taken up from Graſs, and kept with dry meat, have very much abated, and afterwards being turn'd to graſs in the Spring to cleanſe and cool their bodies, have increaſed again to the wonted bigneſs. But whether it were from their moiſt feeding, or holding down their heads to eat (whereby there might be a greater deflux of humours to that part) I cannot determine. But for as much as there are few Horſes quite free from this evil, and many render'd very inconfiderable by it, I will recount the moſt remarkable Caſes, which make Horſes moſt uſeleſs and ſuſpected.

1. The more and greater thoſe *Excreſcences* are, the more the *pupil* of the Eye or the Sight is in danger of being quite obſtructed; which you may farther examine by turning the Horſes eye to the light, and obſerving how much of the *pupil* they do obſtruct.

2. Theſe *Spunges* on the upper edge of the *Uvea* are apt to grow the largeſt, and hinder the Sight moſt.

3. That which grows on the middle of the *Uvea*, does more hinder the ſight by diſtracting the Object, than that, which grows in either Corner or Angle of it.

As for the *Cure*, I ſuppoſe there can be none expected, but from a drying kind of diet; though perhaps outwardly ſomething may be deviſed to ſhadow the Eyes, and keep them from being nakedly expoſed to the Sun, whereby the *pupil* will not be ſo cloſely contracted, and conſequently the Sight not ſo much obſtructed.